

Remarks/Arguments

The claims have been amended to more clearly define the present invention, as well as to better distinguish the invention from the prior art. Even in light of these amendments, no new matter has been added. It would be appreciated if the Examiner would indicate the acceptance of this amendment in the next office communication.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The Examiner has rejected claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. Specifically, claim 4 recited "at least one conveying means in its center portion for aiding the feeding of the material in the radial direction," but the Examiner asserted that the specification "does not disclose what structure the means statement is referring to."

In the first paragraph of the "Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiments" section, the specification states that "[t]he material is thrown radially outwards by the rotor 2, which may as in the illustrated case be provided with conveying means 3 which aid to feed out the material radially." Further, the

Appl. No. 10/506,785

structure of the conveying means is shown in Figure 1. Since the specification clearly illustrate the claimed "conveying means," withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Carlson (US 2,606,502). However, Carlson does not teach every element of amended claim 1, namely at least one rotor ring having at least one opening in a radial direction, as discussed in detail below. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 and claims 2-4 which depend therefrom is respectfully requested.

The Carlson patent is discloses a rotary pump. A rotary pump 1 includes a cover plate 7 and an impeller 5, which rotates relative to the cover plate 7. The cover plate 7 is formed with radially interrupted segments 77, which are spaced apart equally by annular pathways 76. The impeller 5 includes a plurality or radially interrupted segments 56, which are spaced apart by annular paths 57. The cover plate 7 is positioned relative to the impeller 5 so that segments 77 of the cover plate 7 fit into the annular paths 57 of the impeller 5 and so that the segments 56 of the impeller 5 fill the annular pathways 76 of the cover plate 7. Thus, as shown in Fig. 2, radially interrupted

waterways are formed between the cover plate 7 and the impeller 5.

On the other hand, the present invention is directed to a separator having an inlet at a higher pressure and an outlet at a lower pressure, as opposed to a rotary pump that delivers water from a lower pressure inlet to a high pressure outlet. As set forth in the specification of the present application, a sluice feeder comprises a rotor 2 and a stator 7. The rotor 2 includes at least one concentric rotor ring 4 with at least one radially extending opening 5. The stator 7 is provided with concentric stator rings 15, and each stator ring includes at least one opening 8. As a result, at least one radially extending pocket 9 is formed by the at least one radially extending opening 5 of the rotor 2 and the concentric stator rings 15, as shown in Fig. 3.

As explained in the specification, the radially extending pocket 9 moves material from a higher pressure inlet to a lower pressure outlet. Further, as set forth on page 6 of the specification, the structure of the present invention allows the material to be moved from the higher pressure inlet to the lower pressure outlet "whereby the leakage between the inlet 1 and the outlet 11 of the sluice feeder will be minimal." In contrast, the radially interrupted waterways taught by the Carlson reference create pressure to force water from a lower pressure

Appl. No. 10/506,785

inlet to a higher pressure outlet. Since the waterways formed between the impeller and the cover plate of the Carlson pump are radially interrupted to generate pressure, Carlson does not disclose "at least one rotor ring having at least one opening in a radial direction," as required by at least independent claim 1. Thus, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has objected to claim 5 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. However, as explained above, claim 1 has been amended to distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. Thus, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

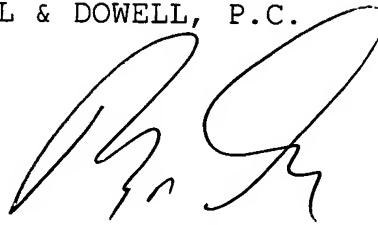
In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of rejections and objections of the claims is respectfully requested and favorable consideration and allowance of the claims solicited. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this response, the amendments submitted herewith, or the allowability of the claims, it would be appreciated if the Examiner would contact the undersigned attorney of record at the telephone number provided below for purposes of facilitating prosecution of this application and for scheduling an interview, if necessary.

Appl. No. 10/506,785

Respectfully submitted,

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By



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